

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 5262

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, SV, NO

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER CALLS FOR EARLY SETTLEMENT OF NORTHERN
PROBLEMS: SOVIETS PROTEST RESEARCH, PREPARE SVALBARD HELICOPTERS
AND SUGGEST REMOVING SVALBARD CONSUL

REFS: (A) OSLO 5117, (B) OSLO 5072 (NOTAL), (C) OSLO 4982
(NOTAL), (D) OSLO 4954

SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND FOUND OCCASVION TO EXPRESS
NORWAY'S CONCERN OVER THE TREND IN NORWAY'S NORTHERN RELATIONS
WITH THE USSR THIS WEEK. PLACING THE ISSUES THERE
WITHIN AN EAST-WEST CONTEXT, HE CALLED FOR EARLY
SETTLEMENT OF THE UNSOLVED PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES
IN A WAY THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE, STABILITY AND NEIGHBORLY
RELATIONS. MEANWHILE, IT WAS LEARNED THAT THE NORWEGIANS
REJECTED A SOVIET PROTEST LAST SUMMER ABOUT NORWEGIAN SCIENTIFIC
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RESEARCH IN THE SO-CALLED DISPUTED BARENTS SEA BOUNDARY AREA, BASED

IN PART AT LEAST ON THE SOVIET SECTOR DECREE OF 1926. THE PRESS REPORTED THE SOVIETS WERE PLANNING TO REMOVE THEIR SVALBARD CONSUL IN EXCHANGE FOR AN UNSPECIFIED FRIENDLY GESTURE FROM THE NORWEGIANS. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE SOVIETS ARE TESTING THEIR FIVE NEW MI-8 HELICOPTERS ON SVALBARD, WHICH WILL GIVE THEM FULL OPERATING RANGE OVER THE ARCHIPELAGO AND THE CAPABILITY OF DELIVERING 150 MEN ON SHORT NOTICE TO VIRTUALLY ANY PART OF SVALBARD. (END SUMMARY)

1. AMID SIGNS OF GROWING CONCERN OVER NORWEGIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS IN THE NORTH, NORWEGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND FELT THE NEED TO RAISE NORWAY'S CONCERNS ABOUT NORTHERN RELATIONS WITH THE USSR PUBLICLY THIS WEEK. IN AN ADDRESS ON EAST-WEST RELATIONS TO THE OSLO MILITARY SOCIETY, OCT 4, FRYDENLUND SAID IT WAS NECESSARY TO GET NORWAY'S PROBLEMS WITH THE USSR IN THE NORTH "SOLVED ONE BY ONE AND IN A MANNER WHICH WILL CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE, STABILITY AND A GOOD NEIGHBORLY RELATIONSHIP."

2. PLACING NORTHERN REALTIONS IN THE EAST-WEST FRAMEWORK THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID WHAT NORWAY DOES IN THE NORTH HAS AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE ON EAST-WEST RELATIONS. HE SAID NORWAY'S "PARAMOUNT OBJECTIVE ... IS TO PRESERVE PEACE AND PREVENT CONFLICTS WHICH WOULD LEAD TO INCREASED TENSION." AS ECONOMIC ACTIVITY EXPANDS, NORWAY'S EFFORTS TO AVOID TENSION WILL BECOME MORE ESSENTIAL.

3. FRYDENLUND SAID IT WAS NORWAY'S VIEW THAT THE MAJOR POWERS ALSO WISH TO PREVENT CONFLICT IN THE NORTH; AND, HE ADDED THAT TO THE EXTENT THESE POWERS WERE PERSUADED OF NORWAY'S CAPACITY AND WILL TO CARRY OUT ITS AIMS IN THE NORTH, NORWAY WOULD WIN GREATER SUPPORT FOR ITS VIEWS ON UNSOLVED PROBLEMS THERE.

4. THE UNSOLVED PROBLEMS, HE SAID, CITING IN PARTICULAR THE CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY, WERE EVIDENT IN RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS. IF LEFT UNTENDED FOR LONG THEY WOULD LEAD TO GROWING SPECULATION WHICH IS NOT BENEFICIAL TO NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS.

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5. SOVIETS PROTEST RESEARCH IN DISPUTED AREA:
FRYDENLUND'S CONCERN CAME AGAINST AN INCREASING NUMBER OF DISCONCERTING DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NORTH WHICH CAST A DARKER LIGHT OVER SOVIET NORWEGIAN RELATIONS. THE SOVIET ROCKET FIRINGS IN THE DISPUTED BOUNDARY AREA (OSLO 4954) AND THE SURPRISE UPROAR OVER INACCURATE PRESS COVERAGE OF THE US NANSEN DRIFT STATION PROPOSAL (OSLO 4982) WERE FOLLOWED LAST WEEK BY A PRESS STORY THAT UNCOVERED THE FACT THAT THE SOVIETS LAST JULY 13

MADE A DMARCHE TO THEN ACTING FOREIGN MINISTRY HEAD SVERRE GJELLUM PROTESTING SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH BY A NORWEGIAN SHIP IN THE BARENTS SEA.

6. ACCORDING TO MFA PRESS SPOKESMAN EGIL HELLE THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR TOLD GJELLUM THAT THE NORWEGIAN SHIP "SEA SEARCH", WHICH WAS CONDUCTING SEISMIC TESTS IN JUNE WEST OF THE NORWEGIAN DEFINED MEDIAL BOUNDARY LINE BUT EAST OF THE SOVIET HELD SECTOR LINE, REQUIRED SOVIET PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ITS RESEARCH BECAUSE IT WAS OPERATING IN THE SOVIET ARCTIC AREA. HELLE SAID THE SOVIETS BASED THEIR STATEMENT ON THE 1926 SOVIET SECTOR DECREE DEFINING WHAT AT THAT TIME WERE SOVIET ARCTIC ISLANDS. THE NORWEGIANS HAVE NEVER RECOGNIZED THE DECREE AS PERTAINING TO THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES. THE NORWEGIANS REJECTED THE SOVIET PROTEST, INDICATING THE INVESTIGATIONS HAD BEEN GOING ON SINCE 1969, WERE CONDUCTED ON HIGH SEAS, HAD NO IMPACT ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF AND ACCORDING TO NORWEGIAN LAW BASING NORWAY'S MARINE BOUNDARY ON THE MEDIAN LINE, WERE IN NORWEGIAN TERRITORY. LATER THIS YEAR ANOTHER NORWEGIAN RESEARCH SHIP, THE "LONGVA II", OPERATED IN THE SAME AREA ONLY TO BE ROUSTED OUT BY SOVIET ROCKET TESTS.

7. NEW SOVIET HELICOPTERS ON SVALBARD:

ADDED TO THE GROWING NUMBER OF PUBLIC INCIDENTS WERE THE RECENT CONCLUSIONS OF MFA POLAR ADVISER BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN WHO RETURNED LAST WEEK FROM A BRIEF SURVEY TOUR OF SVALBARD. AMONG THE MORE SALIENT DEVELOPMENT, HE TOLD EMBOFF, WERE THE PRESENCE OF THE FIVE NEW SOVIET MI-8 HELICOPTERS. THE OLD HELICOPTERS HAD BEEN LOADED ABOARD SHIP FOR RETURN TO THE USSR. BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN SAID NORWEGIANS RECOGNIZED THAT TWO HELICOPTERS WERE ADEQUATE TO PROVIDE SERVICES SOVIETS NEEDED THERE. HE SAID NORWEGIANS WERE ALSO PAINFULLY AWARE THAT SOVIETS NEITHER ASKED PERMISSION TO BRING HELICOPTERS TO SVALBARD NOR TO FLY THEM, EXCEPT WHEN THEY CHOSE TO LAND AT

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LONGYEARBYEN AIRPORT. NOW IN ADDITION, HE SAID IT WAS EVIDENT THAT WITH MI-8 HELICOPTERS, EACH CAPABLE OF CARRYING 30 MEN, SOVIETS COULD OVERFLY THE ENTIRE ARCHIPELAGO AND EVEN MAKE IT TO THE MAINLAND WITHOUT REFUELING, AND THEY WERE CAPABLE OF PUTTING 150 MEN ON THE AIRPORT WITHIN A PERIOD OF 15 MINUTES. SPEAKING DIRECTLY, HE SAID, THIS FACT CAUSED HIM GREAT CONCERN.

8. SOVIETS MAY REMOVE SVALBARD CONSUL:

IN SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT NORWEGIAN NATIONAL BROADCASTING CORRESPONDENT IN MOSCOW JOHANESEN REPORTED HE HAD BEEN INFORMED BY SOVIET OFFICIALS THAT THEY WERE PREPARING TO REMOVE SOVIET CONSUL NIKOLAI NETCHAEV FROM SVALBARD AS THEY KNEW NORWEGIANS WERE UNHAPPY WITH HIM. CORRESPONDENT SAID SOVIETS INFORMED HIM THEY HOPED NORWEGIANS WOULD DO THEM A SERVICE IN TURN.

9. SERVICE THEY MIGHT WISH IN TURN, ACCORDING BUCHER-JONANNESSEN, MIGHT BE TO REDUCE VISITS OF NORWEGIAN SVALBARD GOVERNOR ELDRING TO BARENTSBURG, BUT HE SAID THERE WAS NO INTENTION TO CONSIDER SUCH A PROPOSAL, ALTHOUGH HE EXPECTED NORWEGIANS WOULD HEAR ABOUT THE MATTER AGAIN LATER. SOVIETS HAVE NOT AS YET INFORMED NORWEGIANS OFFICIALLY ABOUT REMOVAL OF CONSUL.

10. CONSUL HAS NOT BEEN TOO HELPFUL IN PAST, AND ALL PARTIES ADMIT HE IS NOT TOO BRIGHT. SVALBARD GOVERNOR ALLEGES CONSUL REPORTS INACCURATELY TO HIS AUTHORITIES BUT MFA HAS NO EVIDENCE OF THIS. INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, GOVERNOR WAS APPROACHED EARLIER BY SOVIET VICE CONSUL EVGENIJ KOVALYENOK ON SVALBARD WHO ASKED WHAT GOVERNOR'S VIEWS WERE ON CONSUL. VICE CONUL SUGGESTED HE TOO WAS DISSATISFIED WITH HIS SUPERIOR.

11. COMMENT: FRYDENLUND'S SPEECH REFLECTS CONTINUING NORWEGIAN CONCERN ABOUT THE TREND OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NORTH AND THE HARM THESE DEVELOPMENTS CAN HAVE ON NORWEGIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS. FRYDENLUND OBVIOUSLY FELT THIS WAS THE OCCASION TO UNDERSCORE THESE PROBLEMS, AND TO INDICATE NORWAY'S BASIC OBJECTIVES AND DESIRE FOR EARLY SETTLEMENT. BY PUTTING WHAT THE GON HAS DEALT WITH IN THE PAST AS PRIMARILY BILATERAL ISSUES INTO AN EAST-WEST FRAMEWORK, HE APPEARS NOW TO BE SEEKING TO BROADEN THEIR SIGNIFICANCE AND HOPEFULLY ENCOURAGE THE SOVIETS TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING IN DEALING WITH THEM.
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